Parochial Beneficence

INCULCATED IN A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH

OF

Boxted,

In the County of Essex,

ON TUESDAY, 7th OCTOBER, 1800,

FOR THE BENEFIT

OF A

SCHOOL of INDUSTRY,

LATELY ESTABLISHED IN THAT PARISH:

To which is prefixed,

A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SCHOOL.

BY ROBERT ACKLOM INGRAM, B. D.

Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge; and Curate of Boxted.

Printed at the Request of the Congregation.

The Profits, if any, are designed to be applied to the Promotion of Schools of Industry in the Vicinity of Boxted.

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* The collection made in the church, for the benefit of the Boxted ſchool of induſtry, at the time the annexed ſermon was preached, including a few donations, remitted from abſent friends of the inſtitution, amounted to 27l. 7s. 6d.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

School of Industry,

AT BOXTED.

SOME account will probably be expected from me, by way of preface, of the Boxted school of industry; and yet, as it is still in its infancy, I have little I can say, in addition to what is briefly noticed in the following discourse. Perhaps, however, it may operate, as an encouragement to other persons to promote similar institutions, in parishes more favourably circumstanced for their success, to inform them of the numerous local inconveniecies and impediments, that have been successfully combated in the instance of our school. Indeed, the obstacles appeared so great, including, the most discouraging of all, my own very precarious connection with the parish, and the want

of a comfortable reſidence in it, that I had nearly determined to endeavour only, in conformity to the Poet's ſentiment, *fungi vice cotis*, by exciting ſome friend to found an inſtitution in his pariſh, which I regarded as impracticable in mine. Still many, who approved of the deſign, wiſhed to have ſome model before them. I was, therefore, reſolved to make the trial at Boxted, as being my preſent ſcene of operation, leaving the reſult to Providence: and, by the bleſſing of heaven, it has been attended with a degree of ſucceſs, that has certainly ſurpaſſed what might have been reaſonably expected.

Thoſe pariſhes are indiſputably the moſt advantageouſly ſituated for ſuch inſtitutions, where the maſs of the population is concentrated within ſo ſmall a compaſs, that the children could attend regularly at ſchool, all weathers, without any material inconvenience, and with no ſenſible loſs of time in going and returning; where, if unavoidable buſineſs renders their aſſiſtance at home neceſſary for an hour, it need not occaſion the loſs of a day's, or half day's ſchooling: where alſo the viſitor or clergyman could, when he thought proper, aſſemble any part of the children in a winter's evening, in the ſchool room, or in his own houſe, for private inſtruction, after the ceſſation of day-light had put a period to the ordinary

employments of the ſchool. The very reverſe of all which, is the ſituation of the pariſh of Boxted. The population is variouſly diſperſed over a conſiderable extent of pariſh, chiefly on the confines of a wild and ſpacious heath, by which the pariſh is bounded, at a conſiderable diſtance from the church, the vicarage, and the reſidence of moſt of the principal inhabitants: where, alſo, the greater part of the children, as might be expected in a pariſh ſo ſituated, have been trained up in habits moſt unfavourable to induſtry and orderly deportment. After every inquiry I could make, the only ſchool-room I could procure for the preſent, has this alone to recommend it, that it is immediately under my own inſpection, and that of ſome of the moſt reſpectable pariſhioners. It is worthy of remark, however, that there is only one ſcholar, that has not more than three-quarters of a mile to come to ſchool: ſome have double that diſtance; while other children are kept from the ſchool in conſideration of a much greater diſtance, and an almoſt impaſſable way during a great part of the winter. In conſequence of theſe inconveniencies, we ſhall find it neceſſary to make the ſcholars the offer of more liberal encouragement, eſpecially, while their earnings are ſtill but inconſiderable, to keep them together during the worſt part of the winter; which, by the

bounty of our friends, we ſhall be enabled to perform, by aſſiſting them, particularly, in procuring ſhoes, and whatever elſe is moſt neceſſary to defend them from the dirt, and inclemency of the weather. As it was the object of our wiſhes to introduce a new employment into the pariſh, by the aid of the ſchool of induſtry, we were under the neceſſity of procuring a miſtreſs from another pariſh, and of compenſating her for foregoing the advantages of living with her friends, and purſuing a profitable employment, at home, of mantua-making, and other needle-work, to induce her to come amongſt us, upon what would appear to her a doubtful ſpeculation. We have, therefore, been obliged to ſecure her 7s. a week, beſides finding her a lodging and ſchool-room, for which we pay 1s. 6d. a week, and making a little allowance of fuel, for the uſe of the ſchool in winter. It is, however, a part of our plan, to deduct 3d. a week from the earnings of each ſcholar, for the payment of the miſtreſs; which is repreſented as indiſpenſable, to qualify the children for any gratuities, or other advantages, that are proffered them. The propriety of which meaſure appears more evident to me each day, as, beſides diminiſhing the expence of the inſtitution, it is the principal circumſtance, that promotes regular attendance at ſchool. Were it not for this, the children would be repeatedly

detained from ſchool on frivolous pretences. Hence they would make little proficiency in their employments; they would fail of acquiring a habit of induſtry, and would ſoon, it is probable, abſent themſelves from ſchool entirely.* Still, in our ſmall pariſh, we have no room to expect a ſucceſſion of a ſufficient number of ſcholars, by a great many, that the aggregate of the three pennies per week ſhould amount to the whole of the weekly expenditure. The reſidual expence, therefore, of our eſtabliſhment will be conſiderably greater, than what would be neceſſary in many pariſhes. But we have no reaſon to regret it, as the miſtreſs is extremely well qualified for her undertaking, and gives univerſal ſatisfaction; the children are comfortable and happy, and already appear to take delight in induſtry; and the parents are, by this time, practically convinced of the benefit of the inſtitution: while the liberality of our friends has abundantly enabled us to ſuſtain the extraordinary expence. The new employment alluded to, is that of of ſpinning hemp: beſides which, the children are

* I have gone ſtill further; I have ſignified an intention of deducting 3d. from the aſſiſtance I proffer them in clothing, &c. in conſideration of every week they abſent themſelves entirely from ſchool, unleſs from ill health, or ſome equally cogent reaſon.

taught to read, and to make and mend their own clothes. In the model I lately propoſed for a ſchool of induſtry, I expreſſed a wiſh of introducing economical cookery. Our firſt object has been to aſſiſt the children in procuring a little better clothing, than what they have at preſent, as being much wanted. When they become a little more expert in ſpinning, and can earn more, and as the winter advances, we think of occaſionally providing for them a meſs of ſoup, or rice pudding at noon, till it becomes a regular part of the ſyſtem.—By buying the ſeveral articles of clothing in a wholeſale way, at good ſhops, we hope to get them both better and cheaper, than what the poor commonly purchaſe for themſelves. Many of the girls can knit their own ſtockings, after they return home in a winter's evening. Some of the leſſer girls are occaſionally employed in knitting for the benefit of the ſchool. Our ſchool of induſtry has been the means of taking ſome ſcholars from the other little ſchools in the pariſh. As girls only are admitted into the ſchool of induſtry, I ſhall occaſionally make ſome compenſation to the miſtreſſes of thoſe other ſchools, by ſending them a few little boys, on the condition, that they ſhould knit for me. The girls in the ſchool of induſtry will be ſupplied with theſe ſtockings at a reduced price. Thus may one ſchool

of induſtry be a mart for the productions of another; and one ſpecies of parochial improvement bring many others in its train.

I have given the parents the option, whether they ſhould receive the earnings of their children in money, or have it laid out in clothing for the children; and to induce them generally to conſent to the latter, I have offered to make an addition, from time to time, in ſome proportion to the amount of the earnings. This I did, in conſequence of a ſpinning ſchool having lately been eſtabliſhed, with great ſucceſs, in the adjoining pariſh of Nayland, under the auſpices of the worthy incumbent, the Rev. W. E. Sims; where the ſpinners are regularly paid their earnings in money, after deducting 3d. a week for the miſtreſs. I could wiſh, however, to reccommend, in general, that no ſuch option ſhould be given in ſchools of induſtry: and that no money ſhould be allowed the children, except a few pence occaſionally as pocket-money, in conſideration of their good behaviour, and whatever ſurplus may remain, after providing them with clothing and food, as far as the latter object makes a regular part of the ſyſtem.

I cannot conclude this account of our ſchool of induſtry, without ſubjoining an obſervation, for which too much reaſon has already occurred in this pariſh,

ſince its eſtabliſhment. While ſeveral poor families thankfully embrace the advantages, that are proffered by the ſchool; there are but too many of the lower claſſes, ſo ſtupidly inſenſible of the beſt intereſts of their children, that a poor woman, if ſhe can obtain ſufficient from her huſband's induſtry, and pariſh allowance, to keep a great girl or two, at a looſe end, to be running backwards and forwards to a ſhop a mile off, for a halfpenny worth of ſnuff, or an ounce of tea, while ſhe herſelf repoſes in eaſe, in the midſt of a few ſmoking embers, will often prefer retaining them at home in habits as deſtructive to good morals, as incompatible with common decency, to ſending them to a ſchool, where they may acquire early habits of induſtry, may earn a conſiderable part of their own ſubſiſtence, and be brought forward to ſuch notice, as may help to procure them creditable ſervices. I am obliged to infer, that, where there is ſo much ignorance and ſtupidity amongſt the poor, as unhappily prevail too generally in this diſtrict, it is abſolutely neceſſary for the complete ſucceſs of a ſchool of induſtry, that, beſides giving encouragement to thoſe poor, that ſend their children regularly to the ſchool, pariſh officers ſhould poſitively deny relief to poor perſons, on account of their families, if they refuſe to ſend their children; unleſs they can prove to

the ſatisfaction of the overſeers, that they are more profitably employed; and in that caſe, it muſt be concluded, that they are leſs in need of aſſiſtance.* The preſent ſtate of the price of proviſions affords, indeed, ſuch an opportunity for enforcing this rule, as we hope will never occur again. And as the Boxted ſchool was honoured with the countenance and liberal ſupport of ſeveral of the neighbouring magiſtrates, I will beg leave, with due ſubmiſſion, to intimate alſo to them, that they will contribute more effectually to the ſucceſs of our and ſimilar inſtitutions, as well as the extenſion of the deſign within their reſpective diſtricts, by recommending, and, as far as their influence and authority extends, compelling, the obſervance of this rule, wherever the like ſchools are eſtabliſhed, than even by their very liberal pecuniary aſſiſtance.

* This rule is enforced at Oakham, where a ſpinning ſchool is eſtabliſhed.

A SERMON, &c.

Proverbs, xxii. 2.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

TO enter upon a regular defence of that ſpecies of inſtitution, which is the object of this day's celebrity, would lead me into a diſcuſſion ſomewhat foreign from the character of this place. And as I have lately ſubmitted a few ſentiments on that ſubject to the conſideration of the public,* I purpoſe to confine myſelf, in my preſent addreſs to you, to what is more perfectly evangelical, the reciprocal duties of the rich and poor, as members of the ſame heavenly houſhold, and children of the ſame Almighty Parent; more particularly, as induced by the occaſion, the indiſpenſable obligation, by which the ſuperior claſſes are

* See "An Eſſay on the Importance of Schools of Induſtry and Religious Inſtruction."

urged and impelled, under the circumſtances of the preſent times, by every exertion of beneficence, to improve the manners, and add to the comforts, of their more neceſſitous brethren.

It has pleaſed God, for the moſt gracious purpoſes, to make trial of the fidelity of his ſervants, by a various and unequal diſtribution of talents. And, indeed, in that diverſity of condition, which is the obvious reſult of the conſtitution of human nature, and could not be prevented but by continual miracles, the benevolence, equally as the wiſdom, of Providence is wonderfully diſplayed. By the mutual relations and dependencies of each different claſs, their ſeveral wants and neceſſities, and diverſified powers of adminiſtering to each others comfort and accommodation; virtues the moſt amiable and intereſting in themſelves, the brighteſt ornaments of the human character, and the moſt improving to the mind, are called into exiſtence, and experience an ample field for their unremitted exerciſe:—ſuch virtues, as are moſt coincident with the benign precepts of Chriſtian morality; and, as we might humbly preſume, are beſt calculated to prepare us for the promiſcuous intercourſe, in another and more bleſſed ſtate, of juſt men made perfect, and of angels of every order of tranſcendent dignity, in the more immediate preſence

of the gracious Parent of the univerſe. In a ſtate approximating to that of equality, or mutual independence, in which reciprocal claims of beneficence are leaſt urgent, the mind, as devoid of its proper diſcipline, is eaſily enſlaved by worldly buſineſs, or overwhelmed in the unſatisfactory purſuits of ſenſuality. Too generally, alſo, may we remark, that the ſociety of equals of each different claſs, in proportion, as they are more ſeparated from all intercourſe and communication with other orders of mankind, is diſgraced by a propenſity to licentious indulgences, at leaſt, by the purſuit of frivolous pleaſures and amuſements, and an inattention to the eſſential duties of life. Whereas, in the intereſting relations of ſuperior and inferior, of parent and child, of rich and poor, a foundation is laid for the moſt permanent and endearing affections and attachments; reciprocal duties and obligations originate, by which mankind are intimately united in the bonds of ſocial harmony; an opportunity is afforded for the exerciſe of the pureſt benevolence on the one hand, and the warmeſt returns of gratitude on the other. Nor is it eaſy to determine, whether the ſtrength of affection, which we conceive for thoſe, on whom we confer the moſt invaluable of bleſſings, is more ardent than that, which is experienced, in return, from thoſe perſons, whoſe

intereſts we have aſſiduouſly promoted, when their minds are once poſſeſſed of a proper ſenſe of the value of the benefits conferred.

But that I may not expatiate into too extenſive a field, in reciting the mutual claims and obligations of each different claſs, my preſent intention, agreeably to the import of my text, is to contemplate mankind, chiefly, as divided into two great claſſes,—of poor and rich; of the ſubordinate part of the human ſpecies, and of thoſe, who are entruſted with a ſuperintending power, and controlling influence, over the lower orders of the community. Far be it from me to ſuppoſe any inherent right in the higher claſſes to exerciſe arbitrary dominion over the more neceſſitous part of their fellow creatures. That *the rich ruleth over the poor*, is the remark of the wiſe king of Iſrael. Wealth unavoidably gives power; and herein is the fidelity of the rich tried;—whether they are diſpoſed to exerciſe that power, which originates in the gracious gifts of heaven, in acts of capricious authority, and the gratification of their intemperate deſires; or in promoting the peace and well-being of ſociety, and adminiſtering to the comfort and happineſs of thoſe, who are ſubjected to their ſuperintending influence. It is only then, as equally ſervants in the ſame heavenly houſhold, with varied commiſſions, and in dif-

ferent degrees of ſubordination, that the rich are empowered to exerciſe authority over their inferior brethren, and to eſtabliſh an improving empire over their minds, by the influence of their beneficence. While the one part of mankind are induſtriouſly engaged in the more menial occupations of common life, the other, in proportion as they are freed from the neceſſity of common labour, are indiſpenſably bound, as ſtewards of God's inheritance, by a courſe only of diverſified ſervices, to diſtribute to each their proper employments, apportioning to them, according to their diligence and fidelity, the means of comfortable ſubſiſtence, ſupplying what is deficient in the ſeaſon of diſtreſs, conſoling them in their afflictions, aſſiſting them by their advice, planning and deviſing ſchemes of beneficence for their happineſs and improvement, and encouraging them in the practice of piety and virtue. According as each man is endowed with a more abundant ſhare of the goods of fortune, is bleſt with ſuperior advantages of ſituation and rank in life, or has poſſeſſed better opportunities of mental improvement; in proportion as his powers of beneficence are enlarged, he is to regard himſelf only as commiſſioned with a more important truſt, and a more arduous and difficult ſervice. Equally then, as the meaneſt of our fellow creatures, whoſe inceſ-

ſant labours are the only ſource, from whence he derives the common neceſſaries of life, are we bound to be aſſiduouſly engaged, with unabated zeal and ardour, from morning to night, riſing up early, and late taking reſt, in the performance of ſuch offices and employments, by which we may moſt advantageouſly promote the intereſt of God's beloved family. The ample leiſure we enjoy, is no otherwiſe a bleſſing to us, than as it is improved in preparing our minds for the diſcharge of the arduous duties of our ſtewardſhip; or as it affords us a greater freedom of ſelection, by what ſervices we may moſt advantageouſly fulfil the ſeveral purpoſes of our exiſtence.

I would aſk, then, how is it poſſible to reconcile with theſe ſentiments a life of diſſipation, or an unprofitable conſumption of time in the purſuit of frivolous amuſements, or an uninterrupted ſeries of convivial pleaſures, as if we had nothing to do in this world, but to enjoy the good things, that are preſent, and to take each one his ſhare of voluptuouſneſs:—that we ſhould deſert the ſphere of our moſt efficacious operation, where the ſources of our property, or profeſſional ties, enhance our powers of beneficence, and withdraw the precious moments of our time from the ſervice of God, and our fellow creatures, to conſume them in the licentious ſcenes of

faſhionable reſort? I wiſh not to adopt the language of declamation.* Yet I much fear, it is a juſt, as well as frequent, topic of popular invective, that the dreadful increaſe of diſſipation and profligacy, of late years, has cauſed a ſad interruption of the reciprocal duties of the rich and poor, and of that improving congreſs, and ſocial harmony, which ought ever to ſubſiſt between the different orders, into which the community is divided. But to repreſent this country as deficient in works of brotherly love, may be thought an injurious reflection, when the humanity of the Britiſh nation is every where extolled, and no judicious charitable undertaking is, at any time, propoſed, but it is encouraged, and ſupported, by the moſt liberal contributions. It is readily acknowledged, that by the bleſſing of God, there are many amongſt us, who have both the means and the will, and an ardent deſire to do good. Indeed, it would be truly lamentable, if, in the midſt of our great and amazing proſperity, as a kingdom, a few crumbs were not permitted to fall from the tables of the affluent, for the benefit of their more neceſſitous brethren. But, ſurely, it is not ſufficient, that a courſe of diſſipation, or indulgence, is interrupted by a few occaſional acts of benevolence, as an atonement, as it were, for a general inattention to the duties of life. Indiſcriminate

acts of charity, done perhaps through oſtentation, or merely to ſave appearances, not only often fail of effecting the good that is expected, but are too frequently productive even of injurious conſequences. It requires, equally, ſome ſhare of thought and conſideration, that our acts of benevolence are well deſigned, and of zeal and diligence in guiding and ſuperintending the execution; that, through ſome perverſe cauſe, they may not be prevented from accompliſhing the deſired effect. Indeed, to enſure ſucceſs, it is neceſſary, not only, that our charitable diſtributions are duly accommodated in their application to the circumſtances of the perſons, whoſe benefit is deſigned, but that their minds alſo are properly diſpoſed to make that good uſe, which is kindly intended of the proffered bounty. The incidents, I may add, which are moſt diſtreſſing in appearance, and, according to our habitual modes of judgement, are not always thoſe, that are moſt acutely felt by the poor themſelves. Nor, again, are thoſe inſtances of relief, which are received with the largeſt ſhare of preſent ſatisfaction, at all times the moſt permanently beneficial, the moſt improving to the mind, or the moſt conducive to the well-being of the community. Every beneficent action ſhould be rendered alſo, if poſſible, a motive and encouragement to good conduct, and the

means of calling into exiſtence ſome amiable and improving affection of the mind. The hand, therefore, muſt be rendered viſible, through which the proffered bounty is diffuſed, that the poor may be united by ties of gratitude and affection to their beneficent ſuperiors, and be rendered anxiouſly deſirous of meriting the regard and eſteem of thoſe, whoſe approbation and favour will be proportioned to their general propriety of deportment. We may infer, then, that the moſt intereſting act of charity, and that, indeed, which is moſt neceſſary to give a real and eſſential value to our other exertions of beneficence, is an habitual intercourſe with our inferiors, as the only effectual means of obtaining a perfect knowledge of the general condition of the poor, an intimate acquaintance with their perſonal characters, as well as local advantages and inconveniencies, and of acquiring a controlling and improving influence over their manners and deportment. Let me alſo ſeriouſly urge the conſideration, that it is not ſufficient, that we anxiouſly deſire to promote the intereſts of our poorer brethren, and that we aſſiduouſly endeavour to do good, unleſs we exerciſe our benevolence, where it is moſt wanted, or may be moſt reaſonably expected. Our powers of beneficence are neceſſarily much limitted. Each one has ſome particular ſphere, to

which he is attached by the ſtrongeſt ties of obligation, and where his influence is moſt commanding. Within that little ſphere, it is probably in his power to ſecure the affections of all around him, and to acquire every ſpecies of perſonal or local information, which is neceſſary to guide and direct his beneficence, or to improve and extend its influence. Thus will the maſs of good that is effected, be rendered incomparably greater by a ſpecies of parochial or provincial beneficence, when each individual, diffuſing the luſtre of his benevolence, as from a central point, is inceſſantly employed in the promotion of every good work, within the bounds of a certain definite circle, that is commenſurate to the extent of his perſonal influence, and the limited capacity of the human mind. The admirable civil and eccleſiaſtical diſtribution of the country into pariſhes, or arrangement of rich and poor into ſmall ſocieties, intimately united together by a community of ſpiritual and temporal intereſts, while it facilitates the exerciſe, adds to the obligation of local beneficence, or of that government of the rich over the poor, by the influence of good works, which is here earneſtly inculcated. To purſue ſchemes of beneficence on principles of univerſal philanthropy, is, too often, to attempt only, what it ſurpaſſes our abilities to accompliſh, while in the mean time our

attention is diverted from thoſe duties, which lie within our immediate province. Little reaſon then, ſurely, have we to boaſt, that we are citizens of the world, if we ceaſe to be the parents of our own children, the friends of our benefactors, and the guardians of thoſe our inferior brethren, who are ſubjected to our parental ſuperintendence. If, indeed, extraordinary emergencies in the ſtate of mankind, as well as certain peculiarities in the ſituation and characters of individuals, may often juſtify the purſuit of ſuch philanthropic undertakings, as appear to embrace the general intereſts of humanity, rather than the exerciſe of thoſe virtues, that are partial and confined in their immediate operation, at leaſt the preſent condition of ſociety indicates the peculiar expedience of the more private and local exertions of beneficence.—The public morals, which are moſt effectually controlled and reformed by habits of perſonal intercourſe and communication between the more reſpectable part of the community and their ſeveral inferior brethren, it is too obvious a remark, have by no means attained the ſame ſtandard of diſtinguiſhed purity, as, by the bleſſed influence of the Goſpel, have the prevailing ſentiments of the nation.—The progreſs of liberal arts and ſciences within this happy age and country, has been rapid beyond the example of former times. And it

is with pleaſure noticed, that many of our moſt illuſtrious philoſophers, relinquiſhing more abſtruſe and ſecluded ſpeculations, have exerciſed their ingenious labours in the promotion of ſuch improvements, as are calculated to add to the comforts, and eventually reform the manners of the loweſt orders of the community. But it is to little purpoſe, that any economical invention or preparation, in which the intereſts of the poor are moſt nearly concerned, is known to a few eminent philoſophers, unleſs every endeavour is uſed by thoſe, who are poſſeſſed of a ſufficient ſhare of liberal information to comprehend its utility, to reduce it to practice, with much zeal and patience, in oppoſition, probably, to rooted prejudices, and confirmed habits, for the general benefit of their immediate neighbourhood.—In the awful events of the preſent age, and the direful calamities, by which the adjacent kingdoms have been overwhelmed, we have diſcerned too much reaſon to lament the diſſolution of ſocial order;—we have experienced juſt cauſe to be alarmed for our own ſecurity, and to be admoniſhed, at length, that the only effectual means of enſuring a continuance of that proſperity, with which it has graciouſly pleaſed heaven to bleſs this favoured iſland, is, by every ſpecies of beneficence, to attach to ourſelves the affections of our inferiors. It is time, then,

that we ſhould learn, that there are other ſocial pleaſures, than thoſe, that are uſually experienced in the company of our equals or ſuperiors; and that there are purer enjoyments in the obſcureſt retirements of the country, than what are commonly proffered in the ſcenes of faſhionable diſſipation. It is, indeed, difficult, by any effort of national benevolence, to attach one claſs of citizens to another; but the attachment, that is formed for the individual, is eaſily transferred to the order, to which he belongs. Let, then, each ſuperior individual, within his proper ſphere, and the ſcene of his ſuperintending influence, by an habitual intercourſe with his poorer neighbours, by the promotion of every laudable parochial inſtitution, the diſſemination of uſeful knowledge, the encouragement of good conduct, and every other ſeaſonable inſtance of beneficence, ſecure to himſelf the affections of his inferiors, and, by co-operation, once more unite every order, into which the community is divided, in the bonds of ſocial harmony.

The preſent occaſion has induced me to expatiate, chiefly, on thoſe beneficent offices, by which it becomes the rich to promote the comfort and improvement of their inferior brethren. The poor alſo have their duties, by which it behoves them to recommend themſelves to the notice and regard of their ſuperiors;

but my advice to them, at this time, muſt neceſſarily be compriſed in a few words. Candour, I truſt, will diſpoſe us to make every allowance for the diſadvantages, under which you neceſſarily labour; yet it cannot but be obſerved, for the injury it does to your own intereſt, that there is no failing more conſpicuous in the conduct of the lower claſſes, than a degree of ſuſpicion and averſion, with which they are accuſtomed to regard the favours of their ſuperiors, and, particularly, every new inſtance of beneficence, however admirably deviſed for their comfort and improvement. Faulty as may often be the conduct of the rich, I have no doubt, that were their kindneſſes more generally received with the gratitude, that is their due, we ſhould enjoy the pleaſure of contemplating a much more extenſive diſplay of diſintereſted benevolence. There are many friendly offices, by which you may certainly add much to the comfort and ſatisfaction of your ſuperiors. Let it, then, be your endeavour, to anticipate their beneficence, by every teſtimony of brotherly love, which your ſituation allows of, particularly by treating them with that reſpect and ſubmiſſion, which their rank in life, their mental acquirements, or profeſſional engagements, juſtly entitle them to. Recommend yourſelves to their regard, and eſteem, by ſuch conduct, as cannot fail to

experience their juſt approbation; and ſtrive to convince them, that your minds are already prepared to make a right uſe of every favour, which their benevolence may prompt them to communicate.—Oh! what a happy pariſh would that be, where high and low, rich and poor, each according to their ſtation and ability, were aſſiduouſly engaged by every kind office of friendſhip and humanity, every teſtimony of affection and attachment, in promoting the comfort of all around them, ſharing the burdens of every afflicted neighbour, weeping with them that weep, as well as rejoicing with them that rejoice, and walking, as it were, hand in hand to heaven. Nor is it leſs gratifying, as we, this day, thankfully experience, to remark the ſeveral members of neighbouring pariſhes, by mutual accommodations, and well-timed aſſiſtance, aiding and encouraging each other in the promotion of every beneficent undertaking.

But, perhaps, there is no ſpecies of congreſs between the rich and poor, more intereſting, or more affecting, than that, which is experienced in the field of education. There is no other kind of intercourſe, by which more powerful ties of attachment are generated, or in which each claſs appears more perfectly in thoſe characters, which particularly embelliſh their reſpective ſituations in life. And I may add, it will

be found, in the event, not leſs improving to the rich themſelves, than to the poor children, that ſhare their parental ſuperintendence. What an admirable proviſion may each perſon of the ſmalleſt portion of affluence, in any pariſh, of which he is likely to remain a permanent inhabitant, lay up in ſtore for the comfort of his advancing years, by training up a ſucceſſion of uſeful and faithful domeſtics, in the firſt inſtance, and afterwards enjoying the eſteem and attachment of many orderly and reſpectable neighbours, whom his timely beneficence had cautiouſly directed in the way, in which they ſhould go.

Permit me now, my Chriſtian Brethren, in a few words, to direct your attention to the humble inſtitution, which has given occaſion to the preſent aſſembly. Liberal proviſions have already been made in various parts of the kingdom, for the religious inſtruction of poor children. But ſuch is the propenſity of the human mind to evil, that it is requiſite, our religious principles ſhould be guarded and defended by every uſeful habit. Induſtry is the beſt ſecurity to virtue, and is itſelf an eſſential duty. In what way, indeed, can the poor diſcover their zeal for God, and ardent deſire after immortality, but by the induſtrious diſcharge of the ſeveral duties of that ſtation, in which it has pleaſed God to place them? And how can

we more properly teſtify our ſincere and anxious deſire for their temporal and eternal welfare, than by training them up to anſwer the ſeveral purpoſes of their mortal exiſtence, by a faithful diſcharge of the various duties of their ſtations, to promote the glory of God, the benefit of their fellow creatures, and their own comfort? The deſign, then, of the preſent inſtitution is, on the one hand, to impreſs their minds with a ſenſe of religious obligation, and, on the other, to teach them, as far as is practicable in a ſchool, the ſeveral offices and employments, whether of menial ſervants, or of careful and diſcreet houſewives; and to habituate them alſo, at leaſt to one ſpecies of profitable induſtry, by which they may be aſſiſted in gaining an honeſt livelihood, or adminiſtering to their neceſſary wants. It is ſurely an object of no ſmall importance, to convince the public, as I hope to do, practically, by the ſucceſs of the preſent eſtabliſhment, that after all thoſe extraordinary expences, that uſually occur in the infancy of any inſtitution, are once defrayed, the good education of poor girls may be rendered univerſal, by a very inconſiderable ſhare of local expence; and not only this, but, what is an unuſual event at preſent, that the girls may be taught, while they are yet children, and at ſchool, to contribute largely towards their own maintenance, by their infant

labours to ſupply their moſt eſſential wants, and to enjoy, from an early period, the comfort of neat and tight clothing, which their own hands have provided for them. The plan, I may ſubjoin, on which this ſchool is eſtabliſhed, is nearly the ſame, as that recommended in the pamphlet before alluded to; or, at leaſt, as perfection can never be immediately attained, by the aid of a few improvements, which your liberality this day may enable us to accompliſh, it will be rendered more ſtrictly conformable to the propoſed model.

My Chriſtian Friends, I have ſolicited your attendance on the preſent occaſion, with a view, chiefly, of recommending to your notice and imitation, the inſtitution, which my reſpectable pariſhioners have co-operated with me in eſtabliſhing in this place, as the firſt, perhaps, in the immediate neighbourhood, on the ſame ſimple plan, accommodated to the circumſtances of a ſmall obſcure village. Contributions of neighbouring Chriſtians have often been ſolicited, in various places, even in this diſtrict, in aid of a Sunday ſchool. Surely we may, with equal propriety, do the ſame in behalf of a ſchool on a much more comprehenſive plan, and which, at firſt at leaſt, muſt be attended with heavier expences. But the liberality of my pariſhioners will not allow me to ſay, that

your aſſiſtance is abſolutely neceſſary for its ſucceſs. The primary expences, however, have been conſiderable. An attempt to introduce a new ſpecies of employment into the pariſh, together with many local inconveniencies, beyond what, I am perſuaded, would be experienced in moſt pariſhes, have augmented the neceſſary charges, and may yet give occaſion to ſome ſhare of additional expence, if our funds ſhould admit of it. It is natural alſo to expect, that the firſt ſchool eſtabliſhed in any diſtrict, on a particular plan, ſhould be attended with more expence, than others, that have an opportunity of improving on its model: which conſideration will, perhaps, afford us a better claim to ſolicit your benevolent aſſiſtance on the preſent occaſion. At leaſt, without your fraternal aid, it will not be in our power, for a period of time, to diſtribute ſuch tokens of approbation amongſt theſe children, as their good behaviour juſtly entitles them to. After, then, the expences of the day are defrayed, it is intended, that a conſiderable proportion of your bounty ſhould be expended, from time to time, either in aſſiſting the children in their clothing, or in other gratuities, profeſſedly, in proportion to their reſpective deſerts; but, as I truſt, without much occaſion for diſcrimination. As it is impoſſible to enſure ſucceſs to any human undertaking; if, by any

unforeſeen event, our deſigns ſhould be defeated, it is my wiſh and intention, that whatever part of your benevolent contribution this day ſhould then remain unappropriated, ſhall be faithfully applied to the promotion of the general deſign of inſtituting ſchools of induſtry in the immediate neighbourhood, or to the aid and aſſiſtance of ſome other ſchools, that are eſtabliſhed on ſimilar principles. Every thing, however, that has yet occurred, ſince its commencement, has been ſo ſatisfactory, as to afford us good reaſon to augurate its complete ſucceſs. As the inſtitution is yet in its infancy, you will neceſſarily excuſe the want of more ſatisfactory proofs of the care, that has been taken of the children's education, as you will not be ſurpriſed at the rather tattered appearance of ſome of the children, while others are decorated for the day in borrowed ornaments. Let it be recollected, that many of theſe children were, a few days ago only, wandering on the confines of a wild and extenſive heath, trained up in habits moſt unfavourable to decency of appearance, and to orderly and decorous manners. If on ſome future occaſion, you ſhould kindly favour us with your inſpection, you will be gratified, I truſt, with more convincing proofs of their intellectual acquirements, as well as their becoming appearance, in a neat and decent uniform, the fruits

of their own honeſt labours, with the aid of your benevolence, and in part the workmanſhip of their own hands.

To conclude;—my Chriſtian Neighbours, whatever you think proper to confer upon us, as a token of your brotherly love, and an acknowledgement of the pleaſure you have this day experienced, will be moſt gratefully accepted;—and I can aſſure you for myſelf, as I may venture to aſſure you in behalf of my little flock, and of theſe dear lambs before you, that it will add much to the ſatisfaction, with which we ſhall participate of your bounty, as the moſt gratifying teſtimony of your approbation of our humble inſtitution, to be informed, when you have returned to your reſpective homes, that you have done likewiſe

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Good Education of Poor Girls

is particularly conſidered.

(W. Keymer, jun. Printer, Colchester.)

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